Health Information Technology in Wyoming

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HIT in rural regions

Health care and HIT in rural regions

- **Limited availability of health care**
  - ❑ Wyoming is underserved in many areas of care
  - ❑ Few practitioners in rural communities have specialized knowledge or access to high-technology equipment
  - ❑ Caregivers/caretakers are often isolated in small communities
- **Limited access to telecommunications**
  - ❑ High-speed access not widely available
  - ❑ Trained IT personnel not present in smaller facilities

Barriers to HIT found in Wyoming study

- Lack of interoperable EHR systems
- Provider and consumer concerns over information exchange
  - Costs
  - Privacy and security
    - Concerns over unauthorized access or release
    - Fear of litigation or malpractice
    - Differing interpretations of HIPAA
  - Unfamiliarity with technology in general

Some proposed solutions

- **On-line resource and policy center**
  - Clearinghouse for research and information
  - Coordinating body for HIT efforts
- **HIT demonstration project**
  - Pilot program on EHR interoperability
  - Demonstrate secure information exchange
- **Review and update of state laws relating to health information**
  - Assure protection while allowing information exchange for appropriate purposes
  - Include context of electronic information

Telehealth as another solution

- Telehealth can help improve access to, and quality of, care in rural areas
  - Telemedicine (delivery of clinical services)
  - Informatics (online access to information and research)
  - Education (distance access to CE and professional development)

Current telehealth projects in Wyoming

- ## Wyoming Network for Telehealth (WyNETTE)
  - Cooperative project among WY Department of Health, University of Wyoming, and Idaho State University
  - Focus on developing infrastructure and pilot projects, particularly tele-mental health
- ## SE Wyoming Telehealth Network
  - Links among seven hospitals in southeast WY
  - Videoconferencing and telemedicine connections to specialty care and education through Cheyenne Regional Medical Center
  - Supported by Federal funds and ORHP Planning Grant
- ## FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Program
  - Grant submitted for statewide telehealth network
  - Dedicated high-speed connectivity for all hospitals, community mental health clinics, and substance abuse centers

Questions?

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